This mattered little, for his and the Rochefort squadron were now destined to sail for the West Indies separately, in order to draw away the English; incidentally they were to recover San Domingo, if possible, and to strengthen Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Santa Lucia. Ganteaume, the commander at Brest, was to bring out his squadron of twenty line-of-battle ships with Augereau and eighteen thousand men on board, sail westward half-way to Newfoundland as a feint, then, returning, land the soldiers in the north of Ireland, and, sailing thence, enter the Channel from the north to cooperate with the flotilla of invasion which, with great expense, had been got together at and near Boulogne. How little in earnest the Emperor was in this showy plan is evinced by his carefully studied letter of January sixteenth, 1805, in which he proposes attacking England in the East Indies with this same Brest squadron and a force of thirty thousand men. This proposition was seriously made even before Villeneuve had put to sea; it should not be considered as one of the occasional divagations which such a man may either claim as revealing a genuine state of mind, or which may be ridiculed by himself, and forgotten by others, as chimerical, according to the turn of affairs. The Rochefort squadron succeeded in passing the English blockaders, and reached Martinique in safety. Villeneuve left Toulon on January seventeenth, 1805, under cover of a storm, which he hoped to use in running from Nelson; but it so dispersed his ships as to make any concerted action impossible, and the separate vessels returned with some difficulty to their port of departure. Ganteaume did not even make an effort to run the English blockade before Brest.

Three months later a third preposterous scheme for mystifying England was divulged, the Indian expedition